

Paris Peace Conference 1919 President's Letter

Oakland University Model United Nations

March 1-2, 2019



Greetings delegates, and let me be the first of many to welcome you to Oakland University Model UN's Fourth Annual High School Conference! My name is Brian Quinn and I am a senior at Oakland University studying History, International Relations, and German. It is my pleasure to serve as your chair of this specialized historical committee on the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. I have been participating in Model UN at the collegiate level for four years as a delegate, and have also chaired several high school conferences. Having been on both sides of the dais, I am quite excited to listen to the productive and substantive debate in which you are sure to engage. Additionally, I look forward to seeing how each delegation will approach this complex topic of pressing historical and international importance.

While I am relaxed when it comes to chairing, I have three expectations for each delegate, both in preparation and during the conference. First, you need to research and know your country's policy and position concerning every topic. Whether this is your first or your fourth Model UN conference, you should be knowledgeable about the topics and your country's policies. These background guides are just the beginning of your research, so use the available resources to gain further and specific insight into each issue. Please learn how to use these resources and use them to your advantage. Furthermore, because we have numerous issues and limited time, it is important that delegates come to the conference with specific proposals and ideas for the draft treaty. Be prepared to argue for "your" cause as strongly as you can, but also recognize that you'll need allies and will need to compromise to achieve your goals.

My second expectation is that everyone is knowledgeable and comfortable with the Rules of Procedure, including the special mechanics for the Historical Committee. It is always disappointing to see a potentially strong delegate restricted by a lacking knowledge of the rules. While mistakes are inevitable (I myself am not immune), and they are completely understandable, please make every attempt to know the rules and how to properly utilize them. If you suddenly feel as though you don't understand something during committee, by all means ask! By simply raising your placard with a point of information or passing up a note to the chair,

your Model UN experience will be much more enjoyable than becoming lost, confused, and frustrated.

My final expectation is that every delegate speaks during the conference. I expect everyone to be active. The Speaker's List in particular provides a wonderful opportunity for delegates to prepare some remarks and utilize the rules of procedure in their interests, such as using various forms of yields. I also expect to have very active unmoderated caucuses as you work on treaty language. This committee will be run by you and your fellow delegates. I do not speak about the topics, you do. The responsibility of keeping debate progressing falls on your shoulders, not mine. I only serve to facilitate debate and maintain order, so if you want to see solutions to the issues, find some and bring them up in committee! There are many pressing issues in this committee and I look forward to seeing what creative solutions you will find together.

Despite the Treaty of Versailles and the other treaties from the Paris Peace Conference being drafted almost a hundred years ago, our world today is still marked by the decisions made during the summer of 1919. Now it is your opportunity to step into the shoes of those world leaders who helped decide the fate of the global community after the most devastating conflict at that time. You will debate the fate of defeated Germany and how to solve the many territorial disputes caused by the Great War. In addition, this is your chance to practice public speaking, decision-making, negotiating and compromise. My hope is that after the conference you reflect on Model UN as an exciting educational experience. With that said, I look forward to seeing you in March!

More information about each committee, rules of procedure, and policies for the conference can be found at the conference website, <https://oakland.edu/polisci/opportunities/model-un-conference>.



An image of the “Big Four” at the beginning of the peace conference. Left to right: British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando, French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, and American President Woodrow Wilson.

Introduction and Historical Context

For the last four years, the world has been torn apart by war. The Great War, unleashed in the summer of 1914 by a royal assassination and complex alliance systems, lasted from 1914 to 1918 and took the lives of over 9 million soldiers and around 10 million civilian casualties.¹ It was in this war that the world experienced the first widespread use of gas warfare, tanks, machine guns, trench warfare, and aerial dogfighting for control of the skies. While the November armistice ended the war on the Western Front, numerous conflicts continue across the world to create new states or expand the borders of other ones, especially in central/eastern Europe and the Middle East. In these places, an innumerable number of groups have formed to fight to create their own states, whether defined by nationality, ethnicity, religion, or international communism. The end of the Great War created this complex entanglement of different national interests, and it is the task of this body to create the peace that will establish order in the postwar world.

Before the war had ended, American President Woodrow Wilson announced on January 8, 1918 his Fourteen Points program. This document not only laid out a number of peace terms for the Central Powers, but also captured Wilson's vision for a new international order in the world. The key principles he articulated was to ensure freedom on the seas, the return of all annexed lands from the war, and the right of all peoples to national self-determination.² The leaders of the world convened from January 1919 to January 1920 in what has been termed the Paris Peace Conference.³ The Paris Peace Conference produced a number of international treaties, mostly peace treaties with each of the defeated Central Powers, but the most influential, and most notable, is the peace treaty with Germany or the Treaty of Versailles.⁴ This committee will simulate and debate topics from each of these international agreements, in addition to a number of treaties from 1920-1923. For the sake of simplicity, we will refer to the working treaty in this committee as the "treaty", "draft treaty", or the "Treaty of Versailles".

¹ See this site for a basic overview of the causes and course of the war, as well as links to other topics, <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/world-war-i-history>.

² <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/wilson-delivers-fourteen-points-speech>. A list of the fourteen points can be found here http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp.

³ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1914-1920/paris-peace>. The best source to go to for research on the Paris Peace Conference is Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2003), this book provides highly detailed chapters on specific topics, countries, and personalities at the conference. We highly encourage each delegate to obtain this source for their research.

⁴ The Paris Peace Conference (Jan. 1919-Jan. 1920) produced a peace treaty with each of the defeated Central Powers. The complete text for each treaty can be found at these links, but we encourage you to focus mostly on the Treaty of Versailles. The Treaty of Versailles (Germany) can be found at <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/m-ust000002-0043.pdf>. The Treaty of St. Germain (Austria) can be found at http://www.emersonkent.com/historic_documents/treaty_of_saint_germain_1919_pdf.htm. The Treaty of Trianon (Hungary) can be accessed at https://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Trianon. The Treaty of Neuilly (Bulgaria) can be found at https://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Neuilly. The Treaty of Sevres (Turkey/Ottoman Empire) can be accessed at http://sam.baskent.edu.tr/belge/Sevres_ENG.pdf.



Committee Mechanics

The historical committee is tasked with drafting and revising a peace treaty to end what has been the most calamitous conflict to date. Therefore, this committee will function with the same procedures as a Model United Nations General Assembly, although with a few additional mechanics, which will be explained below. *VERY IMPORTANT: Although this committee is based on a historical event, please do not feel confined to simply follow the course of events as they actually occurred.* The course of history can always be subject to change by what may seem like minor decisions. Another important item to note is that delegates should refrain from justifying ideas with historical hindsight (just because we know the Second World War happens, does not mean that the drafters of the Treaty of Versailles did). It is difficult to look back at the Paris Peace Conference from the vantage point of 2019, but it is the spirit of this committee for each delegate to step into the role of a world leader and steer the course of world history for the better. **This committee will begin on January 18, 1919.** Everything that happened up to that date in history will be true during the conference; however, anything that happens after that date will not follow the course of history. We will move through time during the conference, and events will occur “on the ground” that may affect our deliberation. You will be regularly given news updates so delegates are informed on developments around the world. However, this is not a Security Council style “crisis committee” requiring you to respond to each “crisis,” although if needed an individual state may draft a directive to issue a response to a given event. Your goal remains to draft and approve a peace treaty.

It is important to remember that, although fighting continues in some places around the world, the war is over and it is the task of this committee to negotiate the peace. Nevertheless, the Allied powers may decide to make use of their armed forces to occupy parts of the former German or Ottoman empires. **It is important for delegates to keep in mind the capabilities of their country and role.** The Central Powers have been decisively defeated on the battlefield with Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria having each already signed a separate armistice in 1918. Therefore, the threat of force would be highly out of character for most countries in this committee.

Four countries in the committee have multiple delegates making up their delegation: France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America (respectively the “Big Four” during

the Paris Peace Conference). The Hedjaz (Arab Kingdom) is also represented by two delegates. Each delegation will have only one vote in substantive matters (i.e. voting for the treaty itself), but each delegate may vote separately in all procedural votes. Prior to the conference, we plan to email each member of these ‘teams’ to allow them to make some pre-conference communication, e.g. sharing of position papers.

There are also a number of actors who were not present at the actual Paris Peace Conference, like the Zionists and White Russians, who are present as delegates in this simulation. These countries have been included in this simulation to introduce more diverse perspectives and to stimulate greater debate. Some country’s positions on different topics will be more obvious than others, therefore, I encourage everyone to be creative in their role and do not feel completely restricted by history; HOWEVER, you should always be sure to remain accurate to your country’s aims and objectives. Also keep in mind that you may make use of our crisis staff to invite an Outside Representative from an unrepresented country or group—these might include, for example, a representative from Bolshevik Russia, Turkish, Armenian, or Kurdish nationalists, or national-liberation figures such as Gandhi in India or Ho Chi Minh from Vietnam.

Passage of the treaty will depend on an affirmative vote from the majority of BOTH the Allied and Central Powers. Therefore, a country like the USA may choose to reject the treaty, but if a majority of the Allied Powers vote in favor, then the treaty will still be adopted. No country in this committee has veto power. Voting procedure will be entered into like any other committee by making a motion to enter voting procedure. The Treaty of Versailles consists of two major sections, each of which will be voted on separately. Delegates may choose to divide the question within each section with a motion to do so in voting procedure. At the end of the conference, if possible, we will vote on the treaty as a whole.

This committee is not a conventional UN committee; there will be no resolution/recommendation writing. Instead, delegates are tasked with drafting their own version of the Treaty of Versailles. Unless an exception is noted in this background guide, this committee follows the standard OUMUN Rules of Procedure regarding Parliamentary Procedure for a General Assembly Committee, for example regarding Points and Motions.

Working Groups

Since this committee cannot address all aspects of the Paris Peace Conference treaties, it will focus on two topic areas: the fate of defeated Germany and the settlement of territorial disputes around the world. Some countries will have more or less to say on each of these topics, while a some may have something to say about both topics. Therefore, we encourage delegates to separate themselves into working groups in order to focus on the specifics of each topic or subtopic. In particular, working groups may want to meet during unmoderated caucuses to advance work on particular sections of the draft treaty. Working groups are defined as informal caucuses of delegates devoted to discussing a certain sub-topic. We suggest that working groups should parallel the major topics, perhaps with sub-groups based on the sub-topics, for example the different geographic regions under Part II. In most cases, the appropriate working group for you will be the one on the topic that affects you most directly. You may, as needed, move in and

out of a given working group. Countries with more than one delegate should divide up their work across multiple working groups.



Part I: The Fate of Germany

The German Empire had been an upstart great power in the middle of the European continent since its relatively late unification in 1871. The annexation of the territories of Alsace and Lorraine from France during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) represent only one point of animosity between those two European powers. While Germany maintained a strong diplomatic position in the European Balance of Power under its first chancellor Otto von Bismarck, the reign of Kaiser Wilhelm II was marked by a number of international crises and embarrassments. During the summer of 1914, when Austria and Serbia were on the brink of war, Wilhelm II played a decisive role in Germany's insurance of a "blank cheque" to Austria-Hungary that Germany would support them in a future war with Serbia.⁵ The complex system of alliances between the great powers soon guaranteed that almost all of Europe would be at war by the late autumn of 1914. Like other European nations, the war had been especially difficult on Germany. Suffering from an Allied naval blockade and frequent food shortages, the German home front had endured many hardships during the war years.⁶ After years of stalemate, the German Army was finally offered a glimpse of victory when the Russian Revolution of 1917 unseated the Russian tsar. Soon afterwards, the German Empire negotiated a separate peace treaty with the Bolsheviks (the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk) in March, 1918 that promised huge swathes of Russia's

⁵ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/wilhelm_kaiser_ii.shtml.

⁶ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/german_experience_01.shtml.

European territory over to Germany, including Ukraine, the Baltic states, and parts of modern-day Belarus.⁷

However, this territorial adjustment in Germany's favor did not last long. By the autumn of the same year, the German Army had collapsed on the Western Front due to renewed Allied advances and the participation of fresh American troops. In addition to this collapse of the frontlines, the German home front erupted into revolution in November, and soon after the Kaiser was forced to abdicate and a German Republic was declared. A number of German generals, most notably the Chief of the General Staff Paul von Hindenburg, began to propagate the "stabbed in the back" myth that blamed Germany's defeat on the battlefield on revolutionary forces at home.⁸ While this legend was historically incorrect and constructed by reactionary political actors, it soon became a popular explanation for Germany's military defeat and humiliation. Finally, Germany agreed to an armistice with the Allies so that by the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month the war on the Western Front would come to an end. Yet while peacetime Germany was being torn apart by revolution and violence, the peacemakers in Paris would have to decide what would happen to the most powerful of the Central Powers.

Woodrow Wilson advocated for the Allied Powers to take a moderate position on the German issue, recognizing that Germany was best served by being welcomed back into the world community. However, France was determined to make Germany pay for the costs of the war. Not only would ten percent of Germany's European territories be stripped away, respectively to France, Belgium, Denmark, and Poland, but also its entire overseas colonial empire partitioned. France and some other Allied powers also wished to prevent Germany from ever being able to wage an offensive war again. This required the German army to be reduced to only 100,000 men, the submarine fleet to be abolished, and certain weapons, like poison gas, tanks, and airplanes to be banned.⁹ However, the most controversial punishment imposed on Germany was Article 231 in the Treaty of Versailles that designated Germany and its allies as having full responsibility for causing the First World War. Related to the war guilt clause, Germany was also forced to pay reparations to the Allied powers for all damages done during the war. After prolonged debate, the Allies had been unable to agree to a sum so Germany was forced to agree to reparations payments without knowing the final sum.¹⁰ The British economist John Maynard Keynes was an outspoken critic of making Germany pay reparations, since he believed it would lead to the economic collapse of the German Republic. While the Treaty of Versailles did not directly cause a second world war, it did add fuel to the fire of German nationalists, like Adolf Hitler, who argued that Germany had been humiliated in the international community. In this committee, delegates will have to decide what to do with Germany on each of these issues, being sure to

⁷ <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/treaties-of-brest-litovsk>.

⁸ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/war_end_01.shtml.

⁹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zp3ncdm#zqh2fg8>.

¹⁰ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/war_end_01.shtml.

balance both punishment and restraint, and the Central Powers will be now be able to speak at the table about the fate of their defeated nations.

Questions:

1. Should Germany be forced to accept blame for causing the war? Or should this blame be shared among the other Central and Allied Powers? How should the treaty reflect this?
2. Does Germany, who has a weakened economy from the war, need to pay reparations to the Allied Powers? If so, how much would they be? And when would they need to be paid by? Who would oversee the reparations payments?
3. Should Germany be forced to completely disarm its military capabilities? Should the German navy and submarine fleet be eliminated? Or the Germany army reduced to a maximum of 100,000 men?
4. Should Germany's borders be revised by the Treaty of Versailles? What will happen to Germany's eastern borders with Russia or a new Polish state? The border with Denmark and the new states in Central Europe? Should the border region of Alsace-Lorraine be returned to France or remain part of Germany? What about the industrialized regions of the Ruhr and Rhineland? Will these former German territories be annexed or occupied by the Allied Powers or administered by the League of Nations?

Part II: Territorial Settlements Around the World

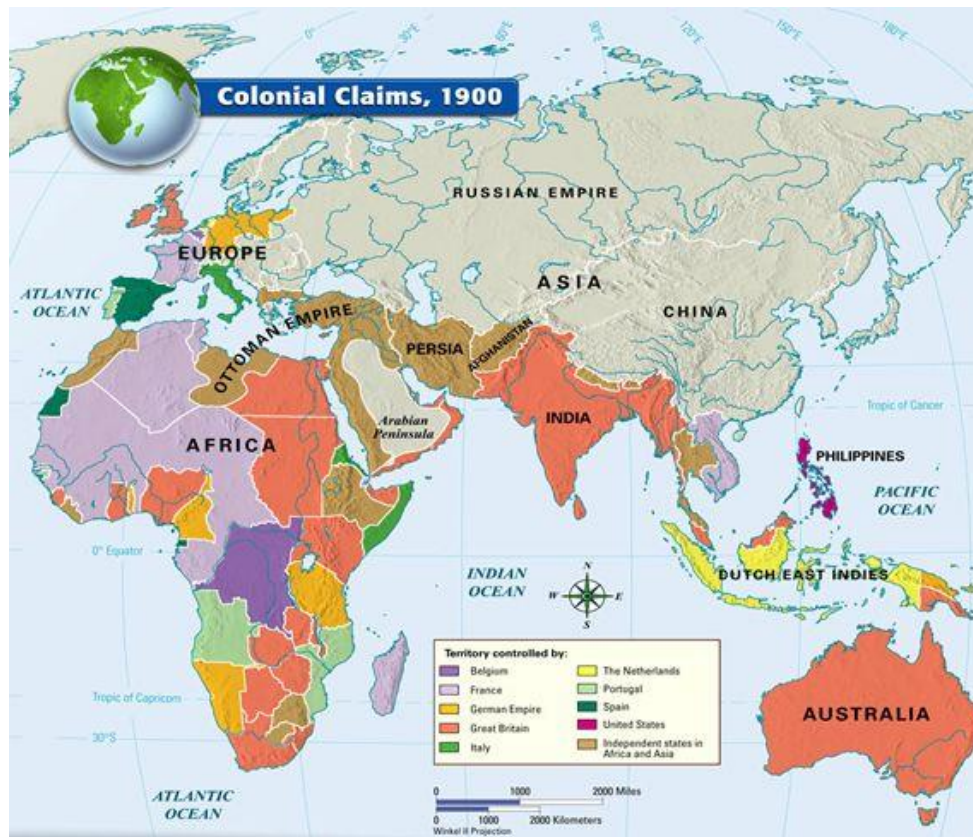
One of the major tasks of this committee will be to settle the territorial disputes around the world and formalize them into the Treaty of Versailles. Some of these new countries will be present in the committee and they will have to negotiate with others about their internationally recognized boundaries.

The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries marked the high point of European imperialism in Africa and Asia. By the turn of the century, the whole of the African continent, except Liberia and Ethiopia, were under the control of European colonial powers.¹¹ The United Kingdom, the largest of the European overseas empires, controlled India, Burma, Egypt, South Africa, Australia, among other members of the Commonwealth. The French administered huge swathes of Africa, mostly in the western half of the continent, along with a sizable colony in French Indochina (Vietnam today). However, there were a number of other notable colonial powers. The slowly-declining great power in the Middle East, the Ottoman Empire, still controlled a vast expanse of territories in Anatolia and the Arabian Peninsula at the start of the First World War. Finally, the Belgians presided over the mineral-rich Congo in the center of Africa. While both late to the game of empire, Italy and Germany both have notable overseas empires in Africa and

¹¹ <https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/colonial-troops>.

Asia. Therefore, when war did erupt in Europe in the autumn of 1914, the rest of the world was mobilized as well.

According to even the smallest estimates, somewhere around four million non-white people had both combatant and non-combatant roles in the European armies during the war.¹² These colonial troops paid a high toll either fighting in Europe itself or across the globe in Africa or Asia. While there had always been voices in the colonies calling for independence and an equal voice on the world stage, these voices became much louder at the end of the First World War. Renewed by the Wilsonian rhetoric of “self-determination for all peoples”, colonies such as Egypt and India began to push for greater independence from Europe. Notably, Ho Chi Minh, the later communist leader of North Vietnam, was present at the Paris Peace Conference (he is not on the initial list of invitees to our simulation, but you can invite him in), where he and a group of other Vietnamese nationalists petitioned delegates to recognize the independence of Vietnam (then part of the colony French Indo-China).¹³ Delegates will have to decide whether they will consider the perspectives of these colonized peoples by recognizing their independence, or reinforce the practice of European imperialism.

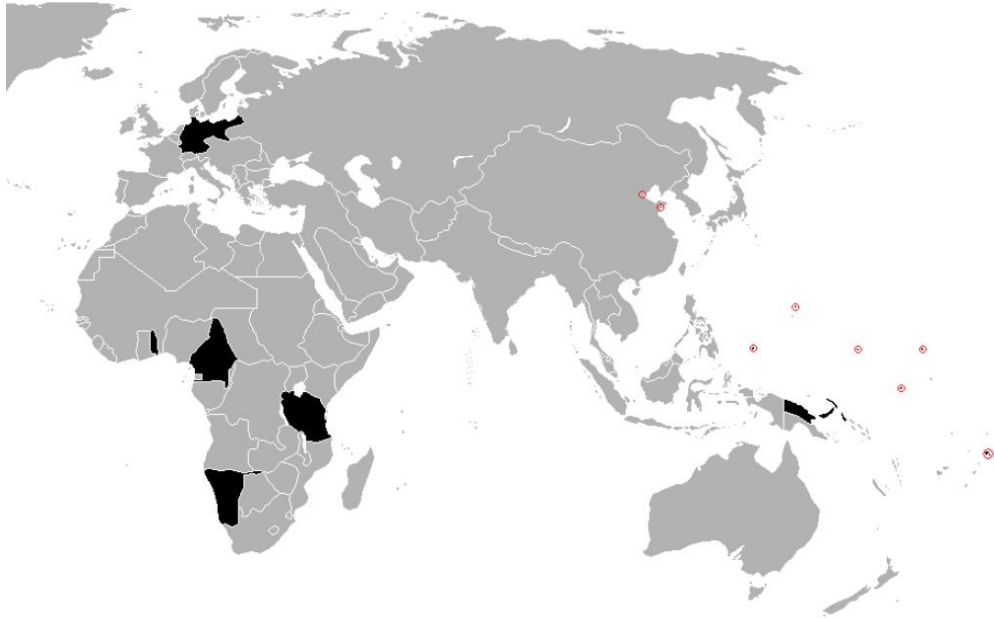


Former German Colonies in Africa and Asia

¹² <https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/colonial-troops>.

¹³ <https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/ho-chi-minh-1>.

In addition to the other punishments to Germany, the Allied Powers aimed to strip Germany of its overseas empire, claiming that the Germans had been unfit and brutal colonizers. Germany, like other European powers, acquired its overseas empire largely at the 1884/84 Berlin Conference where the “scramble for Africa” had been resolved by partitioning the continent between the colonial powers.¹⁴ While France and the United Kingdom received enormous African empires, Germany also acquired colonies in Togo, Cameroon, East Africa (Tanzania), and South-West Africa (Namibia). Soon afterwards the Germans also acquired a minor empire in Asia by taking possession of a part of New Guinea and a number of Pacific islands (Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Palau, and the Marshall Islands). This reconsideration of Germany’s responsibility as a colonizer raises not only the question of Germany’s former possessions in Africa and Asia, but also the other European colonies in both continents, like British Egypt and India, French Indochina, and the Dutch East Indies. Additionally, most European powers, including Germany, controlled a number of treaty ports on the coast of China since the nineteenth century, giving a stark reminder of how Chinese markets were being exploited by Europeans.¹⁵



The German colonial empire, 1884-1918.

Central and Eastern Europe

While the end of the Great War ushered in a number of territorial changes around the world, Central and Eastern Europe experienced a revolutionary change. Where there had been only three multinational empires before, the Paris Peace Conference legitimized a number of new break-away states in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Austria,

¹⁴ <https://www.dw.com/en/130-years-ago-carving-up-africa-in-berlin/a-18278894>.

¹⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/treaty-port>.

Yugoslavia, and Poland. The long-standing Austro-Hungarian Empire was intended to be divided up according to Wilson's principle of national self-determination. Austria had been reduced to a small German-speaking republic to the south of Germany. Some German nationalists in both countries hoped for a possible union between Germany and the new Austrian republic (often referred to by the German term, *Anschluss*).¹⁶ The Treaty of Trianon (1920) between Hungary and the Allied Powers drastically limited the territorial borders of the new independent state, leaving many ethnic Hungarians outside its borders.¹⁷ Even Italy, while on the side of the victorious allies, hoped to exploit the situation and annex territory along the Adriatic Sea from the collapsed Austro-Hungarian Empire. Nevertheless, like Japan, Italy was largely sidelined during the conference and its dreams of greater territorial expansion in Europe were left unfulfilled.¹⁸ A new republic in Poland, which had not existed since the three partitions have divided the kingdom during the 1700s, was being forged out of territory from Germany, Austria, and Russia. The future of the German-Polish border was especially contentious at the conference.¹⁹ The committee will have to decide whether or not a "Polish Corridor" (perhaps centered around the city of Danzig/Gdansk) should be carved out of German territory to give the new Polish state access to the sea. Nevertheless, the greatest geopolitical uncertainty in Central and Eastern Europe was the absence of a stable government in Russia. Following a revolution in February 1917 that forced the tsar to abdicate, another revolution took place in October that swept the Bolsheviks into power.²⁰ The Bolsheviks soon sued for peace with the Central Powers, eventually agreeing to surrender huge swathes of territory in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. By the beginning of the Paris Peace Conference, a violent civil war was raging in Russia between the Reds (the Bolsheviks and their supporters) and the Whites (supporters of the monarchy, provisional government, or other regional leaders). Unlike the Whites, the Reds had no international support and several Allied governments, including Britain and the United States, had intervened in the civil war.²¹ So far this intervention had not made a significant impact on the course of the war and Russia, without one stable government, went into the Paris Peace Conference with no recognized voice—although in our simulation the "White" Russian government-in-exile will be represented (the Bolsheviks would need to be invited in by you). Whether and how the delegates at Paris can divide Russian territory and award it to new countries (e.g. Ukraine, Poland) will be a topic for you to consider.

¹⁶ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/war_end_01.shtml.

¹⁷ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zp3ncdm#z3wn4wx>.

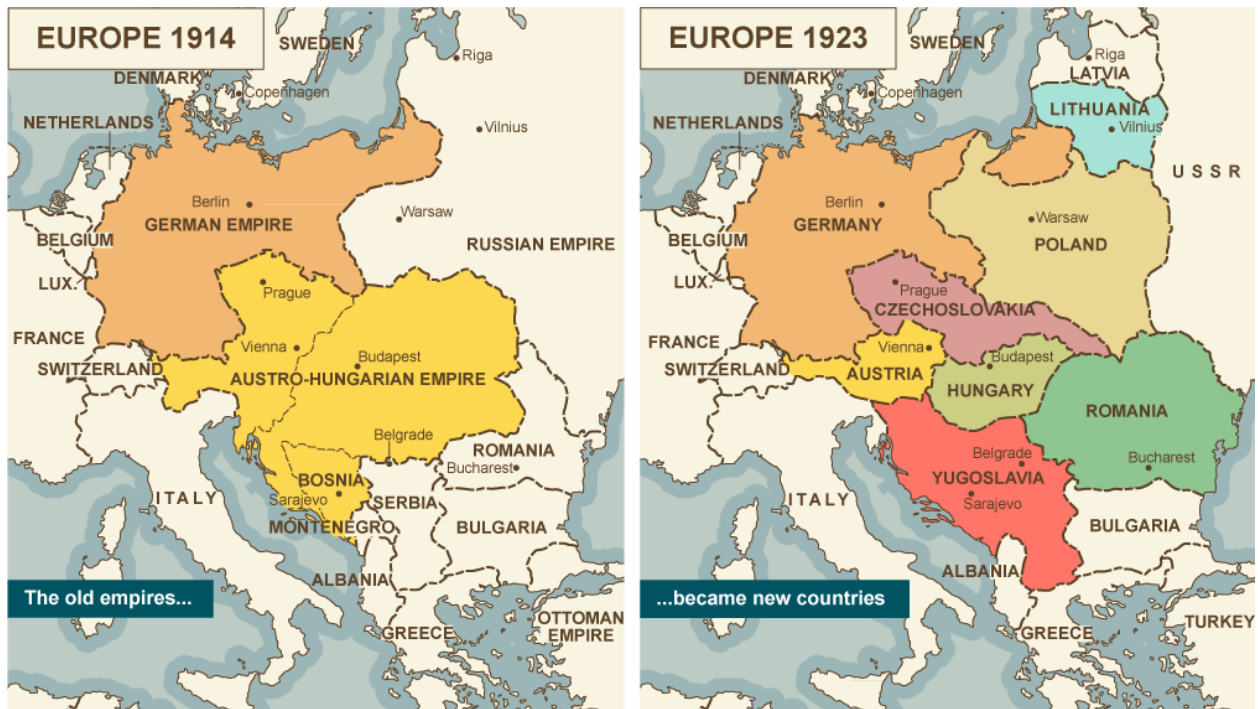
¹⁸ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/italian-delegates-return-to-paris-peace-conference>.

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https://mfa.gov.pl/en/ministry/polish_diplomacy_archive/paris_peace_conference_1919;jsessionid=21BFC398393420AF82074CCA84249C10.cmsap1p.

²⁰ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/eastern_front_01.shtml.

²¹ http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/eastern_front_01.shtml.



The Middle East

The Ottoman Empire had long dominated the politics of the Middle East and before 1914 controlled most of the territory in the region. Nevertheless, the empire's crushing defeat in 1918 opened up a Pandora's box of regional and international actors seeking to exploit the new geopolitical situation. On October 30, 1918 the Ottoman Empire formally surrendered to the Allied powers in the treaty of Mudros.²² Istanbul was occupied by Allied forces. The once-mighty empire was now forced to open the Dardanelles and Bosphorus Straits, demobilize its armed forces, and withdraw from its Arab provinces. By early 1919, the weakened sultanate and imperial government are teetering on the verge of collapse, both from external threats, like the Greeks, currently occupying parts of western Anatolia, and internal threats, like Turkish nationalists organizing under Mustafa Kemal (later called Atatürk). In addition to the Greeks, the Italians and French also are making claims on Ottoman territory in Anatolia. What to do with the defeated Ottoman government and Anatolia will be a major topic of discussion.

You should also recall that during the war, in 1916, a number of Allied diplomats had met to decide the territorial fate of the broader Middle East. The result of this meeting was the Sykes-Picot Agreement, named for the principal authors, Sir Mark Sykes and Francois Georges Picot.²³ In this agreement, France, Britain, and Russia divided the Ottoman lands of the Middle East into separate zones of direct and indirect control. By drawing a figurative "line in the sand", France

²² <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ottoman-empire-signs-treaty-with-allies>.

²³ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/britain-and-france-conclude-sykes-picot-agreement>.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25299553>. The full text of the agreement can be found at
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/sykes.asp.

would receive Syria and Lebanon, while Britain would control Palestine, Iraq, and Jordan, with the intention of controlling the oil fields in the region.²⁴ Russia was to receive control of the Turkish Straits and other territory from the Ottomans, but since Tsarist Russia no longer exists, it seems unlikely that Britain and France would honor this part of the agreement.

In addition to these new states not reflecting the diverse religious or ethnic identities of the populations, this secretive plan got in the way of other agreements the British had made with regional actors. Between 1915-1916, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon corresponded with the Sharif of Mecca, Husayn Bin Ali, in which the two agreed that the Sharif would lead an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire and the British would then recognize the independence of the Arab Kingdom. In 1917, the British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour promised the prominent Zionist Lord Rothschild that Britain would support the “establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people... it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine”.²⁵ In addition to the scheming of European powers, there were a number of local groups all hoping to create a new state of their own. Even in British-controlled Egypt experienced the tide of Arab nationalism sweeping the region in the form of the Wafd Party (Delegation Party) under the influential leadership of the Egyptian nationalist Said Zaghlul.²⁶ The Kurds, who had long been without a state of their own, had been inspired by the promise of self-determination to establish their own national state called Kurdistan; however, few of the European powers were willing to support this new state.²⁷ In the Caucasus, Azerbaijan declared its independence in May, 1918 and sought official recognition from the Paris Peace Conference, but this new republic faced the looming threats of Soviet Turkish expansion.²⁸ The other independent republics of Armenia and Georgia faced similar difficulties in the uncertain postwar Middle East.

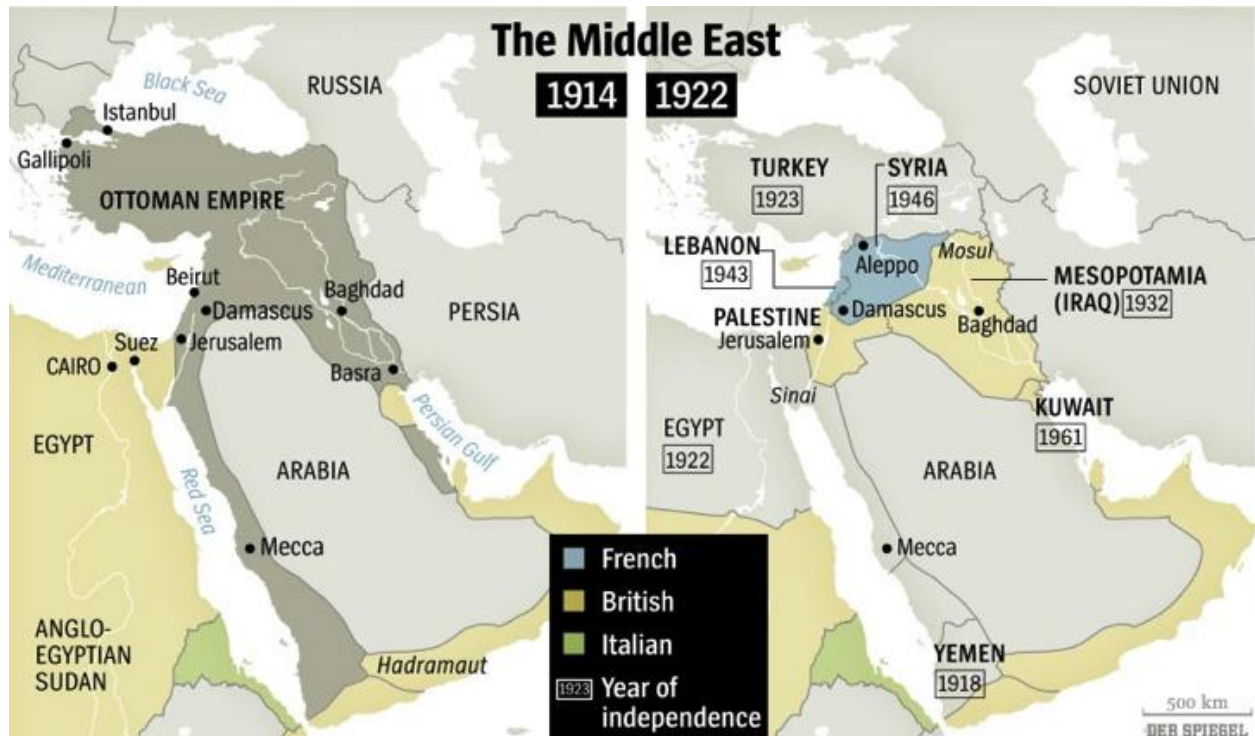
²⁴ <https://www.historyhit.com/what-was-the-sykes-picot-agreement-and-how-has-it-shaped-middle-eastern-politics/>.

²⁵ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zp3ncdm#z3wn4wx>.

²⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Wafd>.

²⁷ Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World*, 444-445.

²⁸ <http://www.visions.az/en/news/404/6a7cabf7/>.



Questions:

1. Will the Treaty of Versailles recognize the independence of colonized peoples? Or will the treaty use the mandate system to continue European imperialism, albeit in a different form?
2. Should defeated Germany be allowed to maintain control of its overseas empire? Should these territories become League of Nations mandates or granted their independence?
3. A number of small states have appeared in Central Europe out of the defeated Austro-Hungarian Empire, such as Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, and Poland. Where will the borders of these new states be? How will this impact the borders of other nations like Italy, Germany, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania? Shall the South Slavs (Croats, Serbs, and Slovenians) each have their own nation-states or one Pan-Slav state?
4. Should Russian territory be handed out to newer states in Eastern Europe, such as Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania? How should the committee address territorial questions regarding Russia while the Russian Civil War continues?

How should the Ottoman Empire's territories be resolved? What would the borders of a new Turkish state be? What about the proposed new states of Armenia, Azerbaijan, or Kurdistan? Would the Greeks or others be given control of any land in Anatolia? Also, who would control the strategically important Dardanelles and Bosphorus Straits?

5. To what degree would prior agreements, like the Sykes-Picot Agreement, play in deciding the new borders in the Middle East? What territories would be controlled by the influential Sharif of Mecca, Husayn Bin Ali?



A Note on Research and Sources

This background guide serves merely an introduction to the committee and its topics, and should serve just as the starting point for your research before the conference. A number of online sources have been cited in this guide that should be useful for specific topics. In addition, the full-text of all the major Paris Peace Conference treaties are all available online. The number of sources about the First World War and its aftermath is quite expansive and continues to grow. You are highly encouraged to visit your public or school library to find more sources on the Paris Peace Conference. The following online links and books are cited in this guide and would be excellent places to begin your own research:

John Keegan, “The First World War”, New York, 2000. A standard military history of WWI.

Ian Kershaw, “To Hell and Back: Europe 1914-1949”, New York, 2015, see chapters 1-3 for a brief narrative of the First World War along with the difficulties of making peace and the results of the Paris Peace Conference.

S.L.A. Marshall, “World War I”, New York, 2001. A standard military history of WWI.

Hew Strachan, “The First World War”, New York, 2013. A narrative history of WWI, with particular emphasis on the impact of the war around the globe.

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1914-1920/paris-peace>

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/post-world-war-i-peace-conference-begins-in-paris>

<https://www.international.gc.ca/odskelton/macmillan.aspx?lang=eng>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zp3ncdm>

Margaret MacMillan, “Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World”, New York, 2003. This book offers detailed insight into the dynamics of the Paris Peace Conference itself, and offers individual chapters on each of the major participants.

Sean McMeekin, “The Ottoman Endgame: War, Revolution, and the Making of the Modern Middle East, 1908-1923”, New York, 2016. This book covers in rich detail the Ottoman war effort, but more importantly for this committee it details the many actors that contributed to the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of several new states in the Middle East.

Susan Pedersen, “The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire”, Oxford, 2015. An excellent study of the League of Nations Mandates Commission that oversaw the administration and protection of the mandates.

APPENDIX: TREATY WORKING PAPER

The following document is the rough draft of the Treaty of Versailles that the committee will begin the conference with. This draft is meant to provide a starting structure and framework for the treaty. It has been drafted largely by the victorious allies. You will see that while some of you may support some of it as is, others will have strong objections to parts of it. Parts need to be developed and filled in, including details about how to treat Germany and proposed borders of new states. Note that if you support or represent one of these new states, it might be a good idea to come to the conference with a clear definition of what borders/territory you wish to have. In other words, we anticipate some working groups looking at maps—and you are encouraged to bring in a useful map!

Delegates should focus their attention on the articles in Parts I and II for revision. It is the task of the delegates to significantly revise and edit this accord. Delegates are highly encouraged to also remove or propose new Articles to the treaty.

TREATY OF PEACE WITH THE CENTRAL POWERS

The above signed, having communicated their full powers found in good and due form, agree as follows:

From the coming into force of the present Treaty the state of war will terminate. From that moment and subject to the provisions of this Treaty official relations with the Central Powers will be resumed by the Allied and Associated Powers.

Part I: The Fate of Germany

Article I: The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.

Article II: The Allied and Associated Governments recognize that the resources of Germany are not adequate to make complete reparation for all such loss and damage. The Allied and

Associated Governments, however, require, and Germany undertakes, that she will make compensation for *all damage* done to the civilian population of the Allied and Associated Powers and to their property during the period of the belligerency of each as an Allied or Associated Power against Germany by such aggression by land, by sea and from the air, and in general all damage.

Article III: The amount of the above damage for which compensation is to be made by Germany shall be determined by an Inter-Allied Commission, to be called the *Reparation Commission*.

Article IV: Germany is forbidden to maintain or construct any fortifications along its borders with...

Article V: The total size of the German Army shall not exceed 100,000 men at any time.

Article VI: The Principal Allied and Associated Powers dictate that Germany shall not be allowed to research, develop, or maintain submarines, tanks, or poison gas.

Article VII: Germany renounces the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 3, 1918) and shall immediately withdraw from the treaty; it shall therefore renounce all claims to the territory granted through that agreement.

Article VIII: The Principal Allied and Associated Powers undertake to establish the town of Danzig, as a Free City. It will be placed under the protection of the League of Nations.

Article IX: This agreement authorizes an immediate de-militarization of all German territory on the left bank of the Rhine river. No German armed forces will be stationed or granted access through the Rhineland region. This demilitarized zone shall be enforced by troops from both the United Kingdom and France.

Article X: The Principal Allied and Associated Powers undertake as well to establish an international administration in the Saar region of the German Empire. This occupation shall consist of troops from France and Belgium, but will be under the administration of the League of Nations. A plebiscite shall be held first after ten years, and later at every five-year interval, for the purpose of allowing the local population to decide whether or not it shall incorporate with Germany.

Article XI: The provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, which had been unjustly separated from France in 1871, shall be henceforth returned to the France.

Article XII: The German provinces of Silesia and Western Prussia shall immediately pass to the custody of the new Polish Republic.

Part II: The Territorial Settlements Around the World

The Former German Colonies in Africa and Asia

Article I: The German government must immediately renounce any claims to sovereignty over its former colonial empire in Africa and Asia, including, but not limited to, Cameroon, German

South-West Africa (Namibia), Togo, German East Africa (Tanzania), German New Guinea and the Pacific Island territories.

Article II: Administration of the following former German possessions shall pass respectively to the designated authorities:

- A. Cameroon shall become...
- B. South-West Africa (Namibia) shall be administered by Togo shall become...
- C. East Africa (Tanzania) shall be immediately...
- D. New Guinea shall...
- E. The Pacific Island territories, including Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Palau, and the Marshall Islands, shall be...

Central and Eastern Europe

Article III: The Principal Allied and Associated Powers recognizes the establishment of an independent Polish Republic, one composed of territories from the former German, Austrian, and Russian empires. The borders of this new states shall be...

Article IV: A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality, thereby granting Italy...

Article V: The sovereignty of all Russian territory, and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia, will be decided by...

Article VI: The Principal Allied and Associated Powers recognize the new state of Czechoslovakia, whose borders shall be set...

Article VII: The boundaries of the Republic of Hungary shall be...

Article VIII: The boundaries of Austria shall be... Additionally, this treaty expressly forbids any future union between Germany and Austria.

Article IX: Based on the principle of national self-determination, the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes shall be granted...

The Middle East

Article X: The Principal Allied and Associated Powers resolve to ensure that the Ottoman sultanate shall retain sovereignty over Turkish lands in Anatolia. Claims by Greece and others shall be....

Article XI: The Dardanelles and Bosphorous Straits shall be administered by a League of Nations Commission, consisting of a body of representatives from the United Kingdom and France, tasked with regulating all naval traffic through the straits.

Article XII: The Principal Allied and Associated Powers recognize a free and independent Kurdistan, whose borders shall be defined by those areas with majority Kurdish populations.

Article XIII: The borders of the new state of Azerbaijan shall be set as...

Article XIV: The Principal Allied and Associated Powers resolve to establish the Mandate of Armenia, which will be administered and overseen by the United States of America.

Article XV: The Principal Allied and Associated Powers resolve to establish a French mandate in Syria and Lebanon with the following boundaries...

Article XVI: The Principal Allied and Associated Powers resolve to establish Mandates under British control in the following territories:

- A. Iraq, whose borders shall consist of...
- B. Trans-Jordan, whose borders shall be defined by...
- C. Palestine, whose borders shall be set as...

Article XVII: The British mandate in Palestine shall be designated the homeland of a future Jewish state, where Jewish immigration will be encouraged and the World Zionist Organization leadership shall be granted special privileges with the British Mandate Authorities.

Article XVIII: The Principal Allied and Associated Powers designate that the Hedjaz (or Arab Kingdom) shall be granted sovereignty over the territory of the entire Arabian Peninsula to the south of the previously defined Mandates in Articles XV and XVI.

Article XIX: The Principal Allied and Associated Powers reaffirm that Egypt, unable to fully govern itself independently, shall remain under the guardianship of the United Kingdom.